

**Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of  
The Connecticut General Assembly  
By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture**

**2/9/11**

**R.B. 830 AA PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN OUTDOOR WOOD-  
BURNING FURNACES**

**The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has some concerns with R.B. 830 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CERTAIN OUTDOOR WOOD BURNING FURNACES.**

While the bill's intent is to exclude "agriculture or farming" from the effects of this legislation it is not possible to do so. Section 1-1(q) of Connecticut's General Statutes, widely accepted as the official definition of agriculture or farming in Connecticut, mentions the production of wood products on at least four occasions. Our citizens have enjoyed a long history of wood use for heat and cooking since the first inhabitants arrived. Wood is an affordable needed alternative to costly foreign fossil fuels at a time when it is critical to reduce our dependence on those fuels. Connecticut has been blessed with an abundance of this renewable, sustainable, readily available natural resource and it is incumbent upon us to use it wisely.

Connecticut residents, including farmers, use a wide variety of wood burning stoves and indoor and outdoor furnaces to heat their homes and businesses. The economic impact to those individuals that will no longer be able to use this plentiful resource will be significant. It will affect the farmer, wood lot owner and homeowner negatively.

The Department believes some simple guidelines may be helpful in the resolution of this controversy. Stack heights and setbacks from neighbor's properties are part of the current law and should be rigorously enforced locally. The use of proper fuel sources should be vigorously monitored and enforced locally. Old outdoor wood burning furnaces should be grandfathered and a reasonable grace period for requiring new technology should be granted. A program to assist owners to acquire new technologies seems reasonable and advisable. The Department believes that adherence to these simple principles would alleviate a significant amount of the problems while allowing all Connecticut citizens, as well as farmers, to take advantage of fuel cost savings, helping them to manage energy costs that threaten them economically and threaten to make them uncompetitive.

The Department would like to thank their sister agencies the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Protection for their assistance in managing this circumstance.